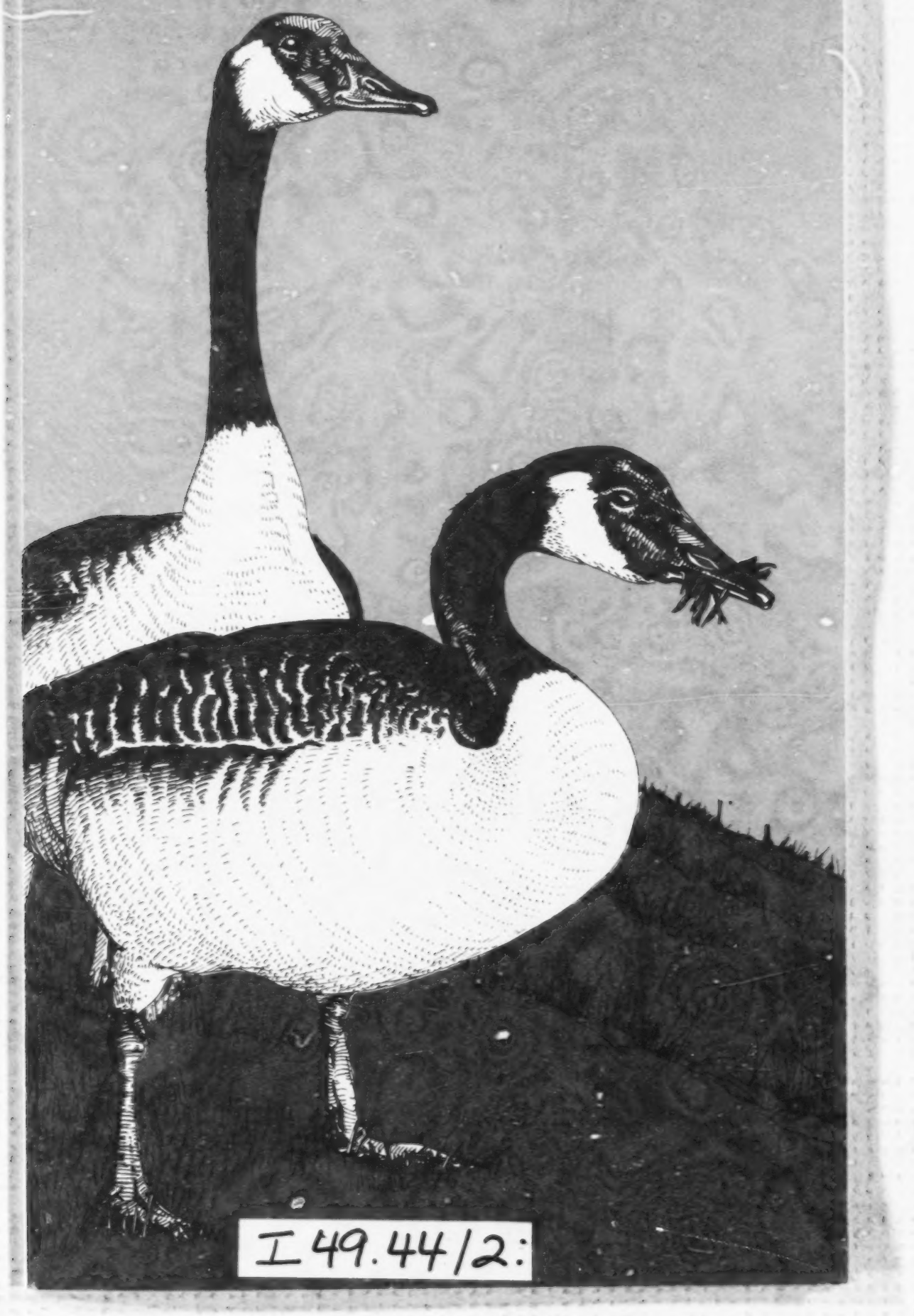
K 63/989

KIRWIN

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



I 49.44/2:

WELCOME TO KIRWIN

Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge, located in north-central Kansas, lies in an area of broken and rolling hills in the narrow North Fork of the Solomon River Valley. The area is part of the transition zone between the tall-grass prairies of the east and the short-grass plains of the west. As a result, grasses, as well as wildlife which are common to both zones are found on the refuge. Historically, great herds of bison roamed the grasslands, often followed by wolves and later, Indians who depended on the buffalo for their livelihood. Waterfowl were virtually unknown in the area until large reservoirs were built in the early 1950's. This newly developed wetland habitat soon began to attract migrating waterfowl.

Kirwin, the first Federal refuge in Kansas, was established in 1954, as an overlay project on a Bureau of Reclamation irrigation and flood control reservoir. The reservoir is fed by the North Fork of the Solomon River and Bow Creek, both being intermediate streams which carry water only in periods of high rainfall. Kirwin Refuge is 10,778 acres in size, and is primarily grassland, open water, and cropland.

MANAGING FOR WILDLIFE

The primary objective of the refuge is to provide nesting cover, food, and shelter for waterfowl, upland game birds, and mammals. The refuge uses a variety of management practices to meet the needs of wildlife. Crops such as corn, wheat, and milo are grown through a cooperative farming program. A portion of the crop is used to provide feed for the thousands of ducks and geese which use the area during the spring and fall migrations. Grazing, brush control, haying, mowing, and controlled burning are also used to provide food, cover, and needed habitat for a variety of wildlife.

FUR AND FEATHERS

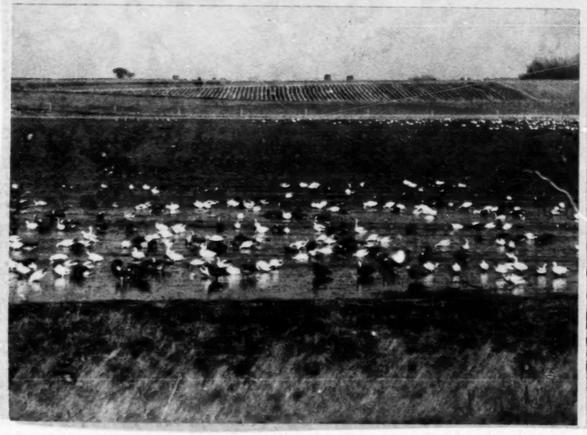
Waterfowl may be seen any time of the year on Kirwin, but their numbers are most impressive during the fall and spring migrations. The late September arrival of pelicans, cormorants, and gulls heralds the beginning of the fall migration. Later arrivals include mallards, Canada geese, white-fronted geese, gadwalls, pintails, and other dabbling ducks. Normally 10,000 mallards and 20,000 Canada geese winter on the refuge. Some ducks and geese find refuge conditions so attractive that they no longer fly any farther south. In the late fall and early winter, both the golden and bald eagles soar over the landscape. Small numbers of peregrine falcons are also present through this period. Northern Harrier, redtails, and kestrels are common to the area.

Spring migration is marked by the arrival of pintails, shovelers, gadwall, and both the green and blue-winged teal, as well as numerous shorebirds. Species that nest on the refuge include Canada geese, mallards, wood ducks, great blue herons, and cormorants.

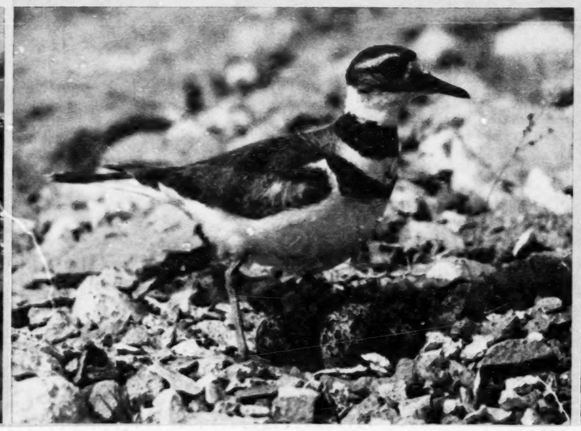
The refuge is rich in its variety of resident species. It is home for 34 mammals, 31 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 197 species of birds. Upland game birds include pheasant, bobwhite quail, greater prairie chicken, and Rio Grande turkey. Pheasants are extremely plentiful, while the prairie chicken is the least common species.

Beaver find food and cover in aquatic habitats, raccoon and skunk work the lake edge, while coyotes hunt the uplands. White-tailed deer seek shelter in the windbreaks and brush of the lake bottom. Fields of native grass hide mice and rabbits, the prey of many species of hawks and owls.

Canada geese, blue and snow geese. USFWS photo.



Killdeer. USFWS photo



Below: ring-necked pheasant. USFWS photo. Top right: fisherman. USFWS photo. Bottom right: white-tailed deer. USFWS photo.

"Men and nature must work hand in hand. The throwing out of balance the resources of nature throws out of balance also the lives of men." Franklin D. Roosevelt

Canada geese, blue and snow geese. USFWS photo.

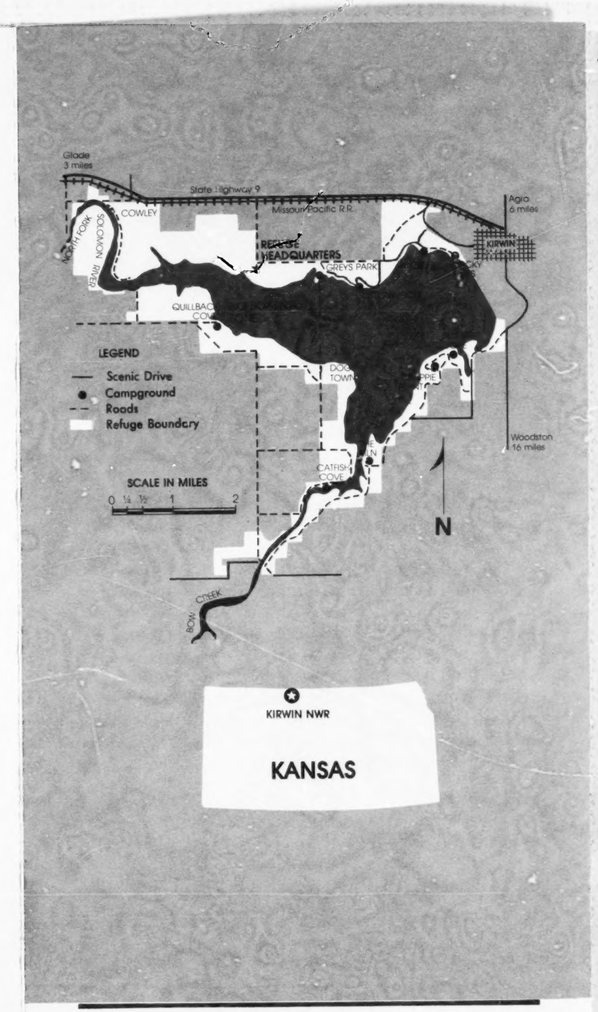
INVITATION TO KIRWIN REFUGE

Refuge headquarters is located 4 miles west and 1 mile south of Kirwin via State Highway 9. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Recreational facilities have been developed and camping and picnicking are permitted on most of the refuge. Fishing is one of the most popular recreational pastimes. Approximately 5,800 acres of the refuge are open to public hunting during the State seasons. Some roads are closed during the hunting seasons to minimize wildlife disturbances. A short scenic drive and nature trail are located close to the headquarters area.

For further information, contact the refuge manager, Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge, R.R. 1, Box 103, Kirwin, Kansas 67644.

Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge is one of a system of over 400 refuges administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and dedicated to the preservation and conservation of wildlife. The financial base for this system was established in 1934 through the passage of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. This Act requires waterfowl hunters to purchase an annual migratory bird or "duck stamp." Funds collected from duck stamp sales have been used to purchase numerous refuges that provide habitats necessary to sustain a variety of wildlife for both hunters and non-hunters to enjoy.



U.S. FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
Department of the Interior

RF6-64610-1

REPRINT NOVEMBER 1989

*U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1988-0-573-167/80006